

# **BORDER HEALTH SECURITY ACT OF 2020**

U.S. Senators Tom Udall (D-N.M.), Martha McSally (R-Ariz.), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.), Kyrsten Sinema (D-Ariz.) and John Cornyn (R-Texas)

U.S. Representatives Xochitl Torres Small (D-N.M.-2.), Anne Kirkpatrick (D.-Ariz.-2), Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.-3), Vincente Gonzales, Filemón Vela (D-Texas-15), Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas-18), Veronica Escobar (D-Texas-16), Deb Haaland (D-N.M.-1), Susan Davis (D-Calif.-53), Juan Vargas (D-Calif.-51) and Ben Ray Lujan (D-N.M.-3)

## **Purpose**

The United States-Mexico Border Health Commission and the Canada-United States Pan-Border Health Preparedness Council address major bi-national health issues, including communicable diseases that strain the public health systems along our northern and southern borders. The Commission and the Council were each created to play critical roles in improving the public health of border communities and with partner organizations and increased funding could do much more to improve public health infrastructure and health outcomes for these communities. The Border Health Security Act of 2020 will improve the ability of these organizations to make recommendations and provide critical funding for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to work with organizations along our borders, improve the emergency preparedness, health surveillance, and public health infrastructure of rural communities at our nation's borders.

## **Summary**

- The bill updates and strengthens the roles of the United States-Mexico Border Health Commission and U.S. Canada Pan Border Health Council in recommending and implementing initiatives to solve border health issues.
- Authorizes \$10.5 million per year for the grant programs outlined below.
- Creates a grant system to implement the priorities that the Commission and the Council identify in their strategic plans to improve and protect the health of border area residents. These grants may address such issues in the border areas including:
  - ◆ Infectious disease testing, monitoring, and surveillance
  - ◆ Public health and public health infrastructure
  - ◆ Health conditions with a high prevalence
  - ◆ Medical and health services research
  - ◆ Health disparities
  - ◆ Environmental health
  - ◆ Epidemiology and health research
  - ◆ Workforce training and development
- Designates a grant program to coordinate Early Warning Infectious Disease Surveillance (EWIDS) projects with State and local all hazards programs to:
  - ◆ Develop and implement infectious disease surveillance plans, public health emergency, readiness assessments and preparedness plans and alert networks
  - ◆ Improve infrastructure and laboratories - including surge capacity, syndromic surveillance, and isolation/decontamination capacity
  - ◆ Workforce training

## **Support from State Government and Public Health Organizations**

American Public Health Association (APHA); The National Rural Health Association (NRHA); The Southern Border Communities Coalition (SBCC); New York Immigration Coalition; OneAmerica; CAFE NM; The New Mexico Department of Health.